

# Implementation of Muslim Progressive Thinking in Human Rights

(Multiple Critique of Omid Safi)

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**ABSTRACT:** *The rise of Muslim Progressive carries three major agendas, namely realizing social justice, gender equality, and understanding of pluralism. With the multiple critique method, Omid Safi criticized the freeze of the minds of thinkers who always blame Jews, Christians, and even Muslims who do not agree with them. Similarly, the criticism on this side is directed at thinkers who make the text so rigid and interpreted as it is. Many muslims and non-Muslims think that human rights democracy is contrary to islamic beliefs. Matters relating to human rights are a challenge for Muslims. In this paper, researchers present a Progressive Muslim offering that responds to human rights. this is done is nothing but to answer islamicda'wah as a religion that rakhmatanlil 'alamin*

**KEYWORDS:** *Omid Safi, Muslim Progressive, Multiple Critique, Human rights*

## I. Introduction

It is undeniable that changes over time are natural. But what has happened over time turns out to be a terrible thing. It is said to be terrible, because oppression is almost a single staged portrait. The oppression of one group over another can be called the most dramatic spectacle commonplace to witness. Anomalies occur in humanitarian systems where justice at stake as a counterbalance to life has been lost, and all that survives is forest logic.

The issue of human rights also raises a series of issues, which harbor many challenges in it, especially in terms of government. But when we think about the issue of human rights, it is necessary to sort between a series of different personalities. One of the things that needs to be sorted is whether Islamic law chooses its own distinctive concept that intersects with certain things or even contradicts the general public?. In other words, if Islamic law itself is not sufficient in providing satisfaction with solutions related to individual rights, is it possible for contemporary thinkers to learn different traditions and integrate with existing Islamic laws?

Dive deeply into the teachings of Islam, then not far from the deepening of the main sources of Islamic teachings, namely the Qur'an and al Hadith. It is said that, because the scope of knowledge and thought space presented by the main source is a guideline that must be owned by every Muslim. Although in fact that Muslims have diversity in various aspects of life owned by each individual, but it can be united through two main sources of Islamic teachings.

In response to the phenomenon, Muslim thinkers and activists began to make movements. Omid Safi and his friends stand with the Concept of Progressive Muslim. To read and discuss the thoughts of Omid Safi

certainly can not be separated from the concept of his whole thinking about Progressive Muslims. At the very least, Omid Safi as the founder of the Progressive Muslim label has engaged many of his colleagues to pour together their thoughts on social justice, gender equality, and understanding of plural reality.

Before discussing more about Omid Safi's thinking in Progressive Muslims we need to first understand the meaning of things related to human rights issues and know little about Progressive Muslims themselves. From there should be a little of what has been explained, can understand us for what has been poured out by Muslim thinkers and activists in the works and concepts of his thinking especially in terms of justice and individual rights.

## **II. Research Problems**

1) Who is Omid Safi and how the multiple critique concept of Omid Safi ? 2) What is the form of progressive Muslim preaching in solving human rights issues?.

## **III. Research Methods**

This research goes into the category of qualitative research that uses library data. Moleong provides the exposure in a book titled "Qualitative Research Methodology" explaining that the implementation of the method should be in accordance with the paradigm then performed according to some considerations. The first consideration regarding qualitative method adjustment is easier when dealing with double reality. Second consideration, qualitative method facilitates direct presentation that raises the relation between researchers and research respondents. While the third consideration explains that this method is more responsive and more adapts to the sheer focus of joint influences and adjustments to the patterns of value encountered in research. This is nothing but the discussion of research can be described from the realm of ontology, epistemology, and the realm of axiology. (AlbiAnggito and Johan Setiawan, 2018:52)

This scientific article focuses the study on Omid Safi's view of thought, which is done by directly reviewing his writings. Then do the interpretation and analysis of the work and do a comparison between one work with another in order to find the important points of intent of the idea Omid Safi.

The main object in this study is starting with a thought called Progressive and on the other hand is interpreted as progressing in all things. This is nothing but a model of thinking that knows no boundaries, both the limitations of place and time. The emergence of this thought as a marker that Muslims not only rely on the minds of individuals, groups, and certain groups, but also do a universal way of thinking and still uphold the guidelines of Islamic teachings in the form of the Qur'an and al Hadith.

## **IV. Discussion Of Problems**

### **Biography of Omid Safi**

Omid Safi is a professor in the United States at Duke University, who is currently not only actively teaching but active as a writer. In 2014, Omid Safi served as the new director at the Duke Islamic Studies Center (DISC). He is one of the most prolific writers. His writings are scattered in a number of media times both nationally and internationally.

Become a professor of classical and contemporary Islamic studies also he is the editor of the volume Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003). The thought he described in his book has been implied that Omid Safi has two interests, namely wanting to realize the Western world that Islam is a religion that values pluralism, women's rights, and upholds human rights. This at the same time opens up great opportunities for Muslims to think more advancedly.

as the initiator of progressive Muslims, Omid Safi offers a multiple critique to have for every Muslim. This is an idea in which one does criticism not only of Islam but also of the current situation. Thus, it has the intention that Muslim individuals can not only find their own position in the current situation, but also to find the

characteristics of Islam in order to maintain the marwah of Islam that rohmatanlil'alamin. (<https://duke.academia.edu/omidsafi/CurriculumVitae>)

### **A Glimpse into HumanRights**

We've had a little bit of a review of what human rights are. In the book Dr. MartinusSardi mentioned that Human Rights is an existing right and attached to self or human dignity, because he is a human being. That right rests with man and cannot be separated from him. The right is not obtained or conferred from an authority of the State or government, but in fact it is owned by man because of human dignity. (**Martinus Sardi, 2014:1-3**)

Please also note that Human Rights must be closely related to Humanism. According to Sadruddin Aga Khan Humanism as a basic orientation towards the interests and welfare of all mankind. He demands that anything that deviates from human welfare should be questioned, regardless of the influence on economic growth, political power, or stability of an order. Abstraction, such as growth, national stability, and regulation, is not a goal, but it only has value if it can create greater people's well-being. (**Mohammad Monib and Islah Bahrawi, 2011:XVII**)

The United Nations on December 10, 1948 proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the declaration was put forward as many as thirty fundamental rights, which man has, even though the declaration is more than fifty years old, but the contents are still actual. From this the United Nations formulated that Human Rights was "as a common standard of outcome to be achieved by all people and all Countries". Thus the list of Human Rights contained in the Universal declaration is a soft-law or material that can be used to make the law of a State. (**Martinus Sardi, 2014: 5-6**)

### **Progressive Muslims as a Pattern of Islamic Thought**

Before going deep into epistemology "Progressive" we should know that the presence of a new concept in the Islamic world is motivated by epistemis dissatisfaction with Islamist groups such as conservative traditionalism and rejeksionism. If the first blindly tails off in the past as a glorious time that cannot be denied and sued. The spirit of clinging to tradition coupled with the spirit of subjugating modernity to the establishment of tradition with the slogan of the times must follow Islam instead of the other way around, because "al-Islam salihlikullizamanwamakan", often boils down to the rejection of modernity and for that this group is often dragged into the puddle of violent behavior (violence) in the name of the enforcement of Islamic law. While the second acts as a modernist who even rashly rejects everything that smells of the past, even trying to deny the presence of various traditions and madzhabs. The group, in the identification of Omid Safi, was embraced by the Liberal Islamist group. (**Mohammad Thoha, 2018: 10**)

When looking at the two group models that have been described, it can be said that historicity no longer costs. Thus because according to Progressive Muslims their understanding is no longer strong enough to present Islam elegantly, namely Islam that is well-adjusted and well-dialogueable with modernity but at the same time maintained its tradition, not reduced authenticity, and maintained its identity. For them reality belongs only to the past, and vice versa. The emergence of advanced Islam is nothing but to establish its existence, a kind of synthesis between fanatical Islam and liberal Islam and also explain to both sides that they no longer uphold historicity. A firm stance must be immediately raised so that this can always keep Islam as a religion *rakhmatanlil'alamin*.

Nonetheless, experts have disagreements in defining this progressive. Syed Hussein Alatas explained that progressive in Islam does not imply abstraction or reduction of Islamic totality, but rather a term that indicates that Islam is actually progressive. Another definition is expressed by Abdullah Saeed that progressive Islam is one of the many traditions of contemporary Islamic thought that seeks to "incorporate the contexts and the needs of modern Muslims" which will ultimately lead to "want to act to preserve the vibrancy and variety of the Islamic tradition". (**Tholhatul Choir, 2009:526**)

Progressives, as Omid Safi points out in the book "Progressive Muslims on Justice, Gender, and Pluralism", refer to the fight for justice in which there is no longer the mastery of one individual or group on another and each has the same rights and space to actualize his role. Thus, this struggle is more directed at the area of action or praxis than the discussion. In addition, Progressive Islam not only considers the Qur'an and Muhammad's life as its foothold, but also the reality in which mankind performs its life. This is important because by looking at the concrete realities and challenges facing our people are expected to be able to solve the problems and problems of human life as a whole. (Omid Safi, 2014: 6)

Actually the discussion of progressives will not find its end. Can be seen from the basic word progress which is interpreted as progress, where the thinkers always offer a concept that is constantly updated and precisely debated. Here the debate takes place because of the presumption from some that progressives themselves will give birth to liberality. To avoid the debate of the meaning of progress itself, Omid Safi then formulated the meaning of progress by providing the condition that something is considered forward if it gives a change in the direction of better, more useful, and more useful for the life of mankind and the world more broadly. Therefore Omid Safi himself formulated progress according to him must be based on justice (al-'adl) and also goodness or beauty (al-ihsan). From that formulation was born keywords that return to humanism and socio-historical aimed at realizing social justice, gender equality, and understanding of pluralism. (IDSS, 2006)

On the other hand Omid Safi does not fully justify the meaning of his progress, although he has also formulated. He is happy to open up other thoughts about the meaning of progress. Omid Safi also criticized those who considered progressive Muslims to be the truest, and most advanced. Omid Safi instead said that Progressive Muslims should not be rigid and elitist, but should not be silent only as a critic. This is why Omid Safi does not use the term critical Muslim. Because according to him, critics are identified with a group that only complains and criticizes, while on the other hand they also do not take any action.. (Omid Safi, 2006:77)

Reasoning the thinking and methods of advancement in Islam, is it possible that the presence of Progressive Islam can be used as an alternative to thinking and guiding attitudes at once?. Progressive Islam, as Omid Safi stated, does not claim to be a canonical model of movement. Progressive Islam comes as a form of exchange of ideas that are constantly changing and evolving as well as recognition of the spectrum of interpretation of the experience of Islam and its rich people.

By bringing and grounding big ideas such as social justice and pluralism, the Progressive Islamic movement identifies itself as a movement that is not only boasting with slogans that are actually meaningless or merely formalities. Slogans that are more effectively apologetic than providing concrete solutions that are to be exceeded (beyond apologetics) by this movement. Religious messages do not need to be dislogankan and dimfletkan, as if the problems of mankind are so complex easily solved with slogans and brochures. The problems of the people must be solved by actively engaging in their real lives. Thus, Progressive Islam not only offers and sales ideas and programs, but most importantly the application of praksis in achieving justice. By combining the dimensions of vision and activism at once, Progressive Islam comes in a face that is populist, populist, and of course rakhmatan lil'alam.

### **Multiple Critique as a Method of Progressive Muslim Thought**

It should be noted together that Omid Safi's three early scientific papers have studied advanced or Progressive Islam. On the other hand one of the other works has studied the thinking of the Sufistic world and the rest in the form of two works that examine the history of Islam.

Early writings in a book entitled Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender and Pluralism in which Omid Safi narrated his work which was later published in 2003 and republished in 2004 and 2005. Omid Safi's thoughts in his early work have inspired many people, especially Muslim scholars. Gagagasan points that support the big theme, one of which is Multiple critique and followed by other discussions such as essential

concerns of progressive Muslim (engaging tradition, social justice, gender justice and pluralism) and others around Islamic forward thinking that pivots to justice and humanity.

Related to the method that underlies the birth of muslim progressive there is one important thing underlined, namely the multiple critique method. The idea was also discussed by Omid Safi in both previous works. Multiple critique literally has the meaning of double criticism. Omid Safi explained that multiple critique is an idea in which a person criticizes Islam and modernity, the goal is for him to find his own position in this day and age. In addition it is also to discover the characteristics of progressive Islam. With multiple critique methode, a progressive Muslim is directed to be able to observe issues related to social justice, justice and gender equality, social issues and various changes that occur in the polemic. (Omid Safi, 2005:2)

Example of the use of multiple criticisms belonging to Omid Safi: on the one hand, progressive Muslims do not agree with the wahaby movement and also neo-wahaby, but on the other hand progressive Muslims also do not agree even disagree with the existence of secular Islamic movements. (Mohammad Thoha, 2018:12)

With easier language, Omid Safi with his multiple-criticism method wanted to criticize groups that are synonymous with ultraconservatives or referred to as those who not only believe in anti-western, Christian, and Jewish but also anti-Islam who do not agree with their thinking. But what Omid Safi presents to multiple critics is nothing but to combat the liberal thinking that has made modernity tend to come to terms with imperialism and colonialism. it is said that because it has become a necessity for a Muslim to criticize the existence of colonialism and imperialism, not just accept his presence. (Mohammad Thoha, 2018:13)

### Implementation of Muslim Progreesive Thinking in Human Rights

Started with the idea of the idea to give rise to humanist Islam (Islamic humanism) where it was felt for Omid Safi less attention. Whereas the idea of the idea according to Omid Safi is the point of the idea of progressive Muslims which in Omid language is referred to as "the heart of a progressive Muslim".

The publication of progressive Muslim thought towards humanity certainly can not be separated from the guidelines of Muslims, namely the Qur'an. AS the holy book of humanity, the Qur'an is certainly not only a guide for Muslims, but also for mankind in general. the Qur'an is loaded with universal human values. It is no exaggeration to say that the Qur'an inspired the birth of human rights principles globally. Among the human rights values in the Qur'an are as follows Surah al Maidah (5): 8;

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

(Departemen Agama RI, 2011)

groups are involved in many social justice issues. For some Muslims, the theme of "social justice" may be new, but the theme of justice in Islam is not new at all, because justice is at the core of Islamic social ethics as many inscribed in the holy verses of the Qur'an. Progressive Muslims argue that justice is the fundamental basis for the creation of peace. That is, peace cannot be created before justice is awakened. Peace should not be interpreted as merely "safe" or "the absence of war or fighting", as it can be a guise to harbor tyranny and unfair social structures. So fighting for justice takes precedence over simply maintaining a "safe" or "no war or fight" situation. (Omid Safi, 2005:7)

Omid Safi considers that humanist Islam is an idea that must be viewed universally. Omid says that "the essential value of human life is Godgiven and is no way connected to culture, geography or privillage".

which is intended that the essence of the value of humanity is a gift from Allah SWT and therefore not limited by culture, geography and social status privileges (privillage). For Omid it was an agenda that should have been thickened. This is because it is related to the value of man as a creation of Allah SWT everything. (Omid Safi, 2006: 207)

Omid Safi said that progressive Muslims can accept the differences that exist in the community. And the most important thing for him is, that progressive Muslims can be responsible and contribute to all the gifts of Allah SWT to him so that they can achieve a harmonious way of life in this world.

to see more broadly the thought of humanism Omid Safi. this has been explained in his work entitled "A Muslim Spiritual Progressive Perspective on Palestine/Israel". it is said so because it is a historical writing in which Omid Safi took the lessons of humanism. In the writing Omid Safi said to himself; "I also write these words as a religious humanist, and a historian"

In the paper Omid Safi discusses the history of Palestine a little. It is said that since 1948 when Israel occupied Palestine, there has been a major change in the country. As many as 750,000 Palestinians have been violently abused by the establishment of the state of Israel. The Palestians were banished from their own homelands. Then the Israelites occupied Palestinian land. Even if there are Palestinians in his country, it's not much and being a minority. According to Omid, the event is an event of systematic injustice, it is because the injustice occurs by involving the state.

Although it is history, Omid tries to see the event from his humanist side to give a view to the citizens of the United States as a country that has strong ties to Israel. He said that as a believer it is necessary to believe in the two attributes of Alloh, namely Ar-RohmandanAr-Rohim. They are two great ilahiyyah attributes, and according to Omid Safi, man can and should make that happen

in response to palestinian and Israeli past events, Omid said "we have live together in the past and can live together again". At the end of his writing, Omid Safi said that humanism needs to be socialized, for him, humanism is "the path to truth and reconciliation" that must be pursued by each of us. (Omid Safi, 2006: 208)

On the other hand, one of the Progressive Muslim thinkers, Khalid Abou el-Fadl explained his thoughts on human rights issues where, his study in classical sources concluded that Islam has two potentials that on the one hand can be used to develop human rights ideas, but on the other hand can also undermine the perspective of human rights. He hereby considers that human rights abuses in Islam are centered on the commitment of Muslims in the enforcement of human rights itself. If Muslims are committed to the enforcement of human rights, then Islam has provided a set of theological foundations, as well as if Muslims are not committed to the enforcement of human rights, then they also prepare a set of evidence that could destroy the conception and idea of human rights.

He also mentioned that the conception of human rights according to classical thinkers is referred to as al-dharuriyat al-khamsah (five urgent interests that must be protected). The five human rights interests that need to be protected according to him are the right to life, the right to family and children, the right to maximize the potential of reason, the right to religion or to choose beliefs, and the right to property ownership. From this he concluded human rights on three increases, namely: al-dharuriyat( necessities), hajjiyat (needs), tahsiniyyat (luxuries), here is a little understanding: *Al-dharuriyyat*, which is the most urgent basis for protection. If this right is not fulfilled then the whole right to the human being is automatically neglected. For example the five rights mentioned earlier. *Al-hajjiyat*, which refers to human needs, does not fall into the category of urgent importance. Unlike before, if this right is not fulfilled, then the basic human right is still possible to be fulfilled.

*Al-tahsaniyyat*, which is related to everything that cannot be categorized as the most important need, let alone urgent. But if this right is fulfilled then, the distribution of human rights will be more fulfilled.

## V. Conclusion

Progressive Muslim thought is increasingly relevant to the socio-religio condition of mankind. By carrying the keywords of humanism and socio-history and bringing three main themes, namely social justice, gender justice, and religious pluralism they really position as the purpose of thinking to reconstruct the thinking of Muslims to be ready to face the challenges of modernity. On the other hand they also do not deny that the method they stretch in multiple critique is actually a method. They are happy to accept new thoughts that are positive and constructive in order to realize the balance of thought between Muslims and other people.

Omid Safi's thinking developed multiple critique ideas supported by his ideas as follows; social justice, gender equality, pluralism, religious peace. All these ideas are ideas that are built to explain who is a Progressive Muslim. But in addition, there is also another thought Omid Safi whose nature underlies all the ideas above, namely justice as the basis for the creation of peace that is not only understood as a condition of "safe" or "no war and fighting". Fighting for justice is more important than maintaining a "safe" or "no fight" situation. Omid Safi does not fully justify the meaning of his progress, although he has also formulated. He is happy to open up other thoughts about the meaning of progress. Omid Safi also criticized those who considered progressive Muslims to be the truest, and most advanced.

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